United Nations A/58/PV.34

General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

34th plenary meeting
Thursday, 16 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 124 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/58/432)

The President: The Assembly will consider a report of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 124 entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", document A/58/432. If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The President: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 58/1).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolution (A/58/L.1)

The President: The General Assembly will take up agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic

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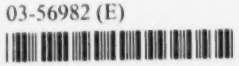

and Social Council", in order to consider a draft resolution entitled "Open-ended panel of the General Assembly on commodities", issued as document A/58/L.1.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/58/L.1. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Kelley: Under the terms of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution A/58/L.1, the General Assembly would decide to convene an open-ended panel of the General Assembly on commodities, to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly, with a maximum of six panelists from among the independent eminent persons and lead discussants on 27 October 2003, from 3 to 5 p.m.

It is estimated that the convening of the open-ended panel would require provision of travel costs for six panelists in the amount of $16,400. These will be absorbed within existing extra-budgetary resources.

The convening of the open-ended panel on 27 October would give rise to additional requirements for conference-servicing. The related conference-servicing requirements, at full cost, is estimated at $13,600. Since a Main Committee of the General Assembly cancelled its initially planned meeting on 27 October, the proposed meeting of the Open-ended panel on commodities could be absorbed within the existing conference-servicing resources.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/58/L.1, entitled "Open-ended panel of the General Assembly on commodities".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/58/L.1?

Draft resolution A/58/L.1 was adopted (resolution 58/2).

The President: Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that the explanations of vote are limited to ten minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Scott (United States of America): The United States notes that the report of the Panel of Experts on Commodities had already been allocated to the Second Committee by the General Committee. We are confident that the Committee has the expertise to do justice to the topic and we also note that this item has been biennialized. In the interest of streamlining the agenda of the General Assembly and ensuring the greatest possible efficiency, we hope that in the future, efforts will be redoubled to avoid duplicating agenda items.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote. The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 39 (*continued*)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/254)

Note by the Secretary-General on proposed revisions to programme 8 of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005: United Nations support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/58/83)

Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/58/16, chapter III, section B, programme 8; chapter IV, section B)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/352)

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico is convinced that we will be able to attain the objectives and the Goals of the Millennium Declaration only if we are able to incorporate the African continent onto the path of sustainable development; that is to say, if we achieve substantial progress in promoting the political, economic and social development of the region. That is why we are concerned about the region's current situation and the prospects for development.

We note particularly, in this context, the *Human Development Report 2003*, which clearly makes the point that, unless the situation quickly improves, sub

Saharan Africa will achieve the goal of providing universal primary education only by 2129, will reduce extreme poverty in half only by 2147 and will reduce child mortality by two thirds only by 2165. This situation is economically unsustainable, politically unviable and morally unacceptable.

Development can be achieved only in an atmosphere of peace, security and political stability. However, in Africa we frequently encounter a mix of socio-economic problems and political factors that raise the risk of instability and violence, which consequently cause institutional failure and the outbreak of conflict, as well as ongoing and often serious violations of human rights and the rule of law. These violent situations often keep Africa from fully benefiting from its vast natural and human resources.

As a member of the Security Council, Mexico has sought to have that body pay particular attention to Africa's problems and to deal with them in a comprehensive manner. As far as my delegation is concerned, security in the region hinges in large measure on the existing capability to resolve socio-economic problems and international cooperation for such work. Mexico also has supported a strategic partnership between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly itself, to ensure the complementarity of efforts.

My delegation sees ample opportunity, in terms of its respective mandates and approaches, for joint work to be done for Africa by our Organization's main organs. Mexico salutes the leadership of the African Union and of other regional and subregional organizations, and invites them to continue to closely cooperate with the United Nations in their search for innovative solutions for conflict prevention and resolution and to promote political, economic and social development. Cooperation between these African organizations and the United Nations in the cases of Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to cite just a few examples, marks a sound step in this effort to build strategic alliances, which must be strengthened.

Notwithstanding the recent achievements made in the context of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, much still remains to be done to lighten the debt burden of African countries. It is unacceptable that several continue to spend more money on debt servicing than on health and education, particularly when the deterioration in their debt indicators can be attributed to a decline in their export income, which is often caused by instability in commodity prices. African countries need to grow, and trade, as we declared in the Monterrey Consensus, can serve as an essential engine for achieving that growth.

To build an open and non-discriminatory trade system, we must push for the elimination of subsidies, which are unjust and unfair trade practices. Special attention will have to paid to trade in agricultural products and livestock exported by developing countries to industrialized ones. Non-tariff barriers must be eliminated. We must also break the vicious circle whereby, on the one hand, the donor countries transfer resources as aid for development to the recipient countries, while, on the other hand, they impede their progress by imposing trade restrictions.

In conclusion, let me refer to the HIV/AIDS scourge as the greatest challenge facing African countries in the area of public health. Mexico wishes to reaffirm that, in keeping with the recent agreements of the World Trade Organization, it will encourage the production of generic medication of proven quality for people that need them in the least developed countries. Mexico is also convinced of the importance of regional and international cooperation, for which we offer our expertise from public and private institutions to train healthcare personnel, to share the experience we have built and provide technical advice in designing indicators that allow us to evaluate both the impact of the epidemic and the global response to it.

Mexico also expresses its firm support for the Secretary-General's recommendation to put an immediate end to the use of mercenaries and child soldiers and for Africa countries to commit themselves to halting arms proliferation and to reduce military expenditures. An effort of that magnitude demands the matching, clear-cut support of the international community.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the progress made in the implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as for his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We are also

grateful to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique for leading the debate on these items. I associate myself with the statement made by Morocco, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

History has recorded Ghana's primary role in fostering African unity. The President of the first Republic of Ghana was one of the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity, which has evolved into the African Union. We in Ghana are very proud of this history and have striven over the years to remain faithful and true to this tradition. Ghana's commitment to the unity of the African continent is an article of faith, which is inscribed in the national constitution and has been strictly adhered to by successive regimes. It is this belief that led us to actively participate in the preparatory process that led to the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975.

For economic integration in any framework to succeed, good governance, peace and security are absolutely necessary to create a environment conducive to sustained economic activity. Ghana, therefore, has a vested interest in promoting these values in the West African subregion. This explains our enthusiastic participation with like-minded countries in the first ever subregional peacekeeping initiative, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in the first Liberian civil war in 1990 and subsequently in Sierra Leone, as well as the current peace process in Liberia.

Ghana, on 28 December 2000 made a smooth transfer of power from one democratically elected Government to another, the first such event in the 43 years of Ghana's existence as a nation. We have a constitution and there is overwhelming consensus among our people that democratic constitutional rule is and should be the form of governance in our country.

Ghana, therefore, when NEPAD was launched in 2001, had all the necessary credentials and was ready to integrate the priorities of NEPAD into its national policies and development planning framework and to mobilize domestic resources in support of the initiative. In pursuit of its total commitment to NEPAD, Ghana has taken the practical step of creating the Ministry of Regional Cooperation and NEPAD as our national focal point. The mission statement of the Ministry states, in part, that it exists to ensure effective formulation, coordination, implementation and monitoring of development policies and plans that will facilitate accelerated national goals and balance development within a regionally integrated system.

Since its creation, the new Ministry has participated in several events organized by NEPAD, including meetings in Johannesburg and Abuja, culminating in Ghana declaring its readiness to be the first country to be peer-reviewed and to be responsible for leading the implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism. In this connection, we wish to emphasize that the African Peer Review Mechanism should not be seen as an extraneous condition proposed by our development partners, but as an idea which African leaders themselves, in their collective wisdom, have recognized as a useful tool to promote the development of the continent. We are therefore encouraged by the fact that 16 countries have so far volunteered to participate in it. We in Ghana eagerly look forward to the publication of the guidelines some time next month to enable us to take the process further.

As a way of popularizing NEPAD at the country level, which has been identified in the Secretary-General's report as a constraint facing the implementation of NEPAD, our national focal point has also organized a series of workshops for key stakeholders, including the media, the parliamentary select committee on foreign affairs and a cross-section of the Ghanaian public. The latest workshop, held by the ministry on the African Peer Review Mechanism was on 11 October 2003, during which the Minister announced that the cabinet had approved the establishment of a national peer review governing council intended to initiate a local peer review mechanism to prepare Ghana adequately for assessment by an external body of eminent persons. The governing council will see to it that technical assessments are conducted prior to the visit of the country review team. He further stressed that knowledge and the operation of NEPAD should move beyond the heads of State and Government to ownership by ordinary people to ensure its success. In this regard, it should be pointed out that the participants in the workshop were drawn from key stakeholders, such as the public sector, the private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

Ghana shares the view expressed by the United Nations Secretary-General in his first consolidated report on NEPAD that the regional economic

communities, as vehicles for regional development and integration, are well-placed to take on the tasks of implementing the regional and sub-regional direction of NEPAD programmes. It is only by combining their development potentials and by overcoming existing boundaries through integrative mechanisms that African countries will be able to overcome these real constraints to economic and social development — development within a dynamic global economy, characterized by the formation of powerful and highly competitive regional economic groupings. We hope, therefore, that a quick solution will be found to the problem caused by the weak link between the implementation committee and the regional economic committees, which has been identified as yet another constraint in the implementation of NEPAD.

At this juncture, my delegation wishes to commend both the NEPAD secretariat and the implementation committee for their role in ensuring the implementation of projects and identifying their priorities under NEPAD, even though we recognize that much more remains to be done.

As stated in our statement in the general debate of the Second Committee, Ghana is of the view that support by the international community for NEPAD cannot be divorced form the broader context of support by the international community for the efforts of developing countries for poverty eradication. There is a widespread view that, as a result of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the social and economic fields, there is currently unprecedented agreement among the international community on the urgent need for a concerted and committed effort in the fight against poverty and better consensus on the means to achieve this goal.

The architecture of this mutual responsibility is supposedly based on a two-pillar structure whereby developing countries get primary responsibility for implementing policies, improving governance and strengthening institutional capacity to accelerate growth and reduce poverty, as Africa is seeking to do through NEPAD, while the international community takes responsibility for buttressing these efforts through substantial, better coordinated and more comprehensive support, through development assistance, market access, debt relief and technical assistance. Actual trends in the world economy, however, do not concern this view. The *Human Development Report 2003* states that the rest of the world has left sub-Saharan Africa behind and that it will take 150 years for that region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals targeted for the year 2015.

The Secretary-General's report has also rightly identified lack of adequate funding as one of the four constraints facing the implementation of NEPAD. While expressing Ghana's gratitude to our development partners who have either individually or collectively supported NEPAD in one form or another, we hold the view that for things to improve for the African continent, the international community, particularly the industrialized nations, should genuinely appreciate the urgency of the situation and offer commensurate support and assistance to NEPAD to re-launch the continent's development.

The current leadership of the continent has resolved to nurture Africa back to prosperity in the framework of NEPAD and is looking forward to practical support through the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields. We acknowledge that there has been a modicum of progress in a few areas, but, in general, progress in several key areas, which include trade, official development assistance and external indebtedness, has been weak or non-existent and in some cases there have been setbacks. It is therefore imperative for the international community to redouble its efforts in implementing agreed strategies and partnerships in Africa to reverse their decline.

We are confident that the United Nations system will continue to play a supportive role in the implementation of NEPAD.

In that regard, we wish to put on record our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for establishing the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, with the responsibility for coordinating the United Nations global advocacy in support of NEPAD. The Office should be accorded the priority it deserves, given the onerous responsibility that has been entrusted to it. We therefore call on the General Assembly to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the Office in order to enable it to play the role envisaged for it. We look forward to discussing with other delegations the details of the requirements of the Office during the consideration of the budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

With respect to causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace, it is pertinent to stress that, although many conflicts continue to rage in Africa, it is a positive development that there has not been any new outbreak of conflict during the period under review. Indeed, it is more encouraging that considerable progress has been made in the search for solutions to the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia. We hope that when the African Union is able to establish the Peace and Security Council, more efforts will be focused on achieving lasting solutions to these conflicts. The Economic Community of West African States will continue to remain engaged in the search for durable peace and stability in West Africa.

Mr. Wako (Kenya): At the outset, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, on the able manner in which you have continued to guide our work during this session. My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique, on behalf of the African Group, as well as with that of the distinguished representative of Morocco, on behalf of G-77 and China.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his first consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/58/254). Kenya, in the light of our history and tradition, gives its full support to NEPAD, which is an African initiative that sends a signal that Africa has come of age in the global village and takes primary responsibility for its development and destiny. In view of the very wide gap that exists, in economic and social terms, between Africa and the developed world, as outlined in the many documents including various human rights and development reports, urgent and radical steps need to be taken to close the gap. It is noteworthy that African countries have moved with the requisite urgency to establish various institutional arrangements to ensure the smooth implementation and overall success of NEPAD.

However, much more still remains to be done. We have noted that progress in Africa on priority areas of NEPAD is at different stages. I will give three examples. First, several countries have taken steps to create national focal points for NEPAD. I am glad to state that Kenya has already established a NEPAD secretariat, which will coordinate and oversee NEPAD activities within the country and abroad, in the Ministry of National Planning and Development. It would be a good objective if in the course of the coming year, all African countries established such national focal points for NEPAD.

Secondly, the African Peer Review Mechanism, which is an innovative mechanism for monitoring progress towards good economic and political governance, is in place. Kenya is among the 16 countries that have joined this Mechanism. It is imperative that all African countries join that Mechanism in the course of the coming year in order to show the commitment of Africa to good governance and the seriousness with which Africa takes its responsibility to ensure that good governance prevails in Africa.

Thirdly, there is need to think of modalities for integrating NEPAD principles, objectives and priorities in national economic development programmes. In Kenya, an attempt has been made to incorporate them in the economic recovery strategy for wealth and employment creation. NEPAD's five-year strategic plan should, when finalized and where possible, be incorporated in the national economic plans.

At the regional level, efforts are being made to re-orient the activities of regional communities to reflect NEPAD priorities in their work programmes. For its part, Kenya, which is a member of the Steering Committee, will host the regional summit on NEPAD for East Africa, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa at the end of this month. That forum will, among other things, take stock and chart the way forward for the Plan's implementation. Within the East African Community, specific areas of priority action include the roads network, infrastructure and energy development. We therefore support the role of regional groups, as has been outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/58/254).

After the failures of Africa in the last four decades, African countries are now showing much determination and commitment in implementing NEPAD. At the same time, they recognize that there is much to be done to achieve the goals of the New Partnership, which are in line with the Millennium Development Goals. However, actions by African countries on their own will not be enough to achieve faster economic and social development. The spirit of

partnership embedded in the design of NEPAD and reflected in its engagement with the international community provides hope and encouragement for its implementation. Moreover, the commitments that have been made by Africa's development partners in various forums provide a solid basis for scaling up support for NEPAD. In that regard, we urge the disbursement of the resources already pledged by development partners.

In order for NEPAD to succeed, international support needs to be enhanced in the form of official development assistance, debt relief and trade and foreign direct investment, particularly the financing of infrastructure. In that regard, it is vital for our development partners to ensure that their aid and trade policies are complementary. We are nevertheless encouraged by the commitments and initiatives of our development partners, notably the United States of America, the G-8, the European Union and other bilateral arrangements, but much more needs to be done.

Although we have witnessed an increase in official development assistance to Africa, it remains far too small as compared to the levels of the 1990s. Of course, Africa does not want to rely on official development assistance. But we believe that improving market access for Africa's agricultural and non-agricultural goods is key to its ability to finance development. Thus, as a matter of priority, developed countries should phase out agricultural subsidies to their agricultural products and remove other trade barriers for African exports, and, in particular, remove tariff and non-tariff barriers to products of interest to African countries. Furthermore, debt relief is an imperative, as debts are serious bottlenecks and obstacles to efforts to eradicate poverty in Africa. There is a need for the development partners to be more understanding on this issue, for they also share part of the blame for the debt crisis.

Kenya is grateful to the Secretary-General for having established the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, currently headed by an able diplomat experienced in African affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, whose mandate includes coordinating global advocacy in support of NEPAD; coordinating all reports to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on NEPAD; and following up on the recommendations of global conferences and summits related to Africa. We note also that that Office serves as the focal point for NEPAD at United Nations Headquarters. We hope that the Office will be given the necessary financial and other support in order to enable to discharge its mandate more effectively. Kenya will be making a contribution when budget issues come to be discussed. We would like sincerely to thank the Secretary-General for this and other efforts in the context of continued support by the United Nations system and the international community for NEPAD.

I would now like to turn to item 39 (b), "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/58/352) on this matter. The recommendations contained in the report are far-reaching and well thought out. They constitute a solid foundation for addressing the major issues that hinder stability and development in Africa. However, we note with concern that progress in the various targeted areas has been slow and erratic.

Regrettably, conflicts continue to rage in Africa, hampering peace, stability and socio-economic development on the continent. Kenya therefore accords priority to the prevention, management and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We continue to spearhead the Inter-Government Authority on Development (IGAD) peace processes in southern Sudan and in Somalia. Negotiations on a peaceful solution are ongoing. On 23 September 2003, the warring parties in the Sudan signed a historic agreement in Naivasha, Kenya. That agreement, which addresses transitional security arrangements, will no doubt provide the basis for a bright and prosperous future for the people of the Sudan. The parties are due to reconvene shortly to discuss power-sharing, wealth-sharing and the status of the three disputed regions of the Sudan. Indeed, it is Kenya's belief that the peace process in the Sudan is irreversible.

However, in order to consolidate and guarantee a long-lasting peace, it is vital for the international community to play a greater role in the process. In this connection, I would like to urge the United Nations to play a leadership role in the post-conflict reconstruction of the Sudan and to request Member States to support the reconstruction.

On the Somali peace process, there has been encouraging progress in the negotiations. Only last month in Nairobi, representatives adopted the charter which is expected to lead to elections. Kenya

encourages the parties concerned to consolidate and take advantage of the gains so far made.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General in helping to find a peaceful solution to these and other conflicts in the region. We are particularly grateful for the United Nations initiative of preparing a draft humanitarian protocol for inclusion in the IGAD peace process for the Sudan. Equally welcome is the assistance given by the United Nations Development Fund for Women in establishing a women's resource centre for women representatives participating in the IGAD peace process for Somalia. We would like to encourage the United Nations further to expand its assistance to the two processes.

The role of Africa's other development partners and of the international community is crucial in resolving conflicts on the continent. Their support in strengthening African capacity for conflict resolution, among other things is needed now more than ever before.

The Secretary-General rightly singles out the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as one of the major causes of conflict in Africa. As a country that has suffered greatly from an influx of small arms and light weapons, Kenya is a key player in our subregional efforts to combat trafficking in such weapons.

The international community's priority must be to support subregional initiatives, since illicit arms trafficking thrives by exploiting the loopholes resulting from divergent national practices regulating private arms possession and trading. Nairobi, Kenya, hosts the Secretariat on Small Arms and Light Weapons, a regional initiative involving 10 countries of East Africa, the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. At the biennial conference on small arms and light weapons held in New York in July this year, Kenya presented a report on the activities of the Nairobi Secretariat and on the measures undertaken by the Government of Kenya at the national level to curb the menace.

We commend the United Nations for addressing this proliferation partly by encouraging the holding of workshops on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and launching a capacity-building programme for security forces on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. We look forward to some of these initiatives' being extended to our subregion, as indicated by the Department of Disarmament Affairs.

Kenya commends the achievements made by United Nations peacekeeping operations. Missions in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea and other parts of the world have succeeded in restoring peace and stability. The African Union and the United Nations have also played a positive role in tackling the crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its efforts to restore normalcy in Liberia. While appreciating the important role played by the United Nations in consolidating peace and stability in the world, Kenya urges greater United Nations participation in African initiatives such as the peace processes led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and by ECOWAS.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has ravaged the continent and reversed the socio-economic gains made since independence. To counter the ravages of the pandemic, the Kenya Government has put in place various measures to curb the further spread of HIV/AIDS. As a result of those efforts, prevalence rates have been significantly reduced in the past four years. However, much remains to be done in this area. Last month, Kenya hosted the 13th International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Africa, a forum that brought together more than 6,000 delegates from all over the world to discuss urgent measures that we all must take to combat the pandemic. We call upon the international community to intensify its efforts in fighting the scourge by, inter alia, providing adequate financial resources and enhanced access to antiretroviral drugs for the infected.

For peace and stability to flourish, good governance is a necessity. Indeed, good governance is a prerequisite for sustained growth. That challenge is one that Kenya has been able to meet. In December 2002, Kenya witnessed a historic moment when it held general elections that were universally recognized as free, fair and democratic and that led to a transfer of power. It is our strong belief that the opening up of a democratic space by leaders will go a long way in reducing conflicts and promoting development in Africa.

In conclusion, I believe we all realize that accelerated economic growth in Africa, initiated and driven by Africans themselves and supported by development partners, is in the wider interest of the

peace, stability and development of the entire international community.

Mr. Ul Haq (Pakistan): Mr. President, it is a privilege for me to participate in this important discussion under your stewardship. Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with African countries and supports all initiatives aimed at development of the African continent. It was in that spirit that we supported the initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Pakistan received with interest the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/254), prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 57/7 of 4 November 2002. The report is a consolidated document detailing in depth the progress achieved in implementation of and support for NEPAD. We support the recommendations mentioned in the report, particularly the one requiring bold actions by all stakeholders to address the challenges and constraints identified in the report.

The primary objective of NEPAD was to eventually eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries on the path of sustainable growth and development, thus reversing the marginalization of Africa and integrating it into the globalization process. That is a formidable challenge requiring massive investment and technical support from all relevant stakeholders. Africa cannot meet such a gigantic challenge alone.

We are happy to note that this comprehensive programme, which is Africa-led, Africa-owned and Africa-driven, has taken off and is gaining momentum with the support of the international community, including the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society. In due course, the initiative will definitely change the fate of tens of millions of African people stricken by poverty, disease and conflict.

We have noted the important structural reforms undertaken by most African Governments, which are reflected in improved macro-economic management, trade liberalization and the promotion of greater and enhanced private sector participation. Whenever such reforms have been sustained and underpinned by civil peace, they have succeeded in enhancing growth and reducing poverty. However, the efforts of African countries have been constrained owing to a lack of coordination between regional economic communities and implementation committees, weak institutional capacity and a lack of adequate funding. Effective strategies need to be developed to ensure that the ownership and leadership of the initiative remains with African nations.

What our African brothers and sisters need today is not a diagnosis of the causes of underdevelopment or prescriptive advice, but a strong helping hand from the international community to ensure NEPAD's success, especially through enhanced official development assistance, without conditionalities, the redemption of pledges to the Trust Fund for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the provision of aid without strings attached. In addition, meaningful international support for NEPAD should include improved market access; accelerated and increased debt relief, including complete debt cancellation; deliberate efforts to increase the flow of foreign direct investment to African countries; the transfer of technology to African countries; human resource development, particularly in the education and health sectors; and a special and focused endeavour to arrest and eradicate HIV/AIDS.

We greatly appreciate the assistance provided to Africa by United Nations specialized agencies in the areas of peace and security, poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, governance and infrastructure development. However, much more needs to be done in support of NEPAD to strengthen the capacity of regional economic communities, the NEPAD secretariat and the Commission of the African Union. With international support through enhanced official development assistance, increased investment, a durable solution to the external debt burden and unhindered market access, the objective of integrating African countries into the global economy and the goals of durable peace and sustainable development can certainly be realized.

Pakistan has consistently supported Africa's political and economic aspirations. We are proud of our participation in several United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. Our military and civilian personnel have been part of United Nations operations in Somalia, Namibia, Liberia, Western Sahara and Sierra Leone. Pakistan will continue to lend its moral and material support to African countries. Our technical assistance programme for Africa is an ongoing process aimed at training young professionals in diverse fields.

African people have long suffered. The challenges faced by Africa are colossal. NEPAD represents a realistic framework to meet those challenges. It is time that implementation focus on the areas that hinder us in attaining NEPAD's goals and in meeting its challenges. It is in that context that the international community can make its most profound contribution. For our part, we reaffirm Pakistan's continued support for NEPAD in every way possible.

Mr. Zenna (Ethiopia): Allow me to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his comprehensive report on the progress made towards the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Let me seize this opportunity to express our profound appreciation to the Secretary-General, who has assured us of his full support since the inception of NEPAD. His continued commitment has helped mobilize the entire United Nations system and the global community in support of the development endeavour of Africa.

We note the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General in promoting international development, peace and security and in this regard welcome the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, headed by Ibrahim Gambari. We count on him and his colleagues to promote the values and principles of NEPAD throughout the world and to mobilize support for Africans towards the implementation of their initiative.

We urge that this Office be given all the necessary support to carry out its duties. In tandem with the basic principles of NEPAD, African countries and their partners have made important progress in developing institutions, projects and programmes and in enhancing consultation for implementation of the priorities of NEPAD.

Since the endorsement of NEPAD by the international community here at the United Nations last year, African countries have prepared detailed projects and programmes for its implementation and we have made progress in that regard. With respect to institution building, the necessary work was completed to implement the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). APRM documents have been prepared, 16 countries, including Ethiopia have acceded to the Mechanism and the initial panel of eminent persons has been appointed.

It is encouraging that the first APRM review will be conducted during the second half of this year. It is also important to note that the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme has been finalized. Based on this programme, detailed country and region-specific projects have been prepared for implementation. Those projects and programmes address intervention to improve food security and the productivity of the agricultural sector in various regions of the continent.

Efforts have also been made to address conflict in the African continent. In this regard, Africa is working in cooperation with the G-8 countries to prepare a joint plan to enhance Africa's capability to undertake key support operations. Progress in elaborating efforts in areas such as health, education, science and technology and environment and tourism have also been made.

The challenges and problems that prompted us to develop NEPAD and the socio-economic development programme of the African Union, which is aimed at regenerating and reviving the African continent, have not changed. It is therefore critical that we strengthen this partnership between Africa and the developed world and remain committed to the objectives of eradicating poverty and improving the quality of life of the African people.

In this regard, let me highlight the major challenges that require increased support by the United Nations and other donors. First, agricultural and rural development, economic diversification and environmental protection are the basic elements of NEPAD for which African efforts need to be backed by international cooperation.

The challenge of agriculture and food security still remain. We need to give high priority to agricultural development. The current food insecurity in Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa need to be addressed.

In addition, we need to lay a foundation for sustainable agriculture. My country is taking measures such as water, harvesting, research and extension service, resettlement and similar other activities to minimize the effect of the current drought that haunts Ethiopia.

Secondly, it is of particular concern for the majority of African countries that not much has been done to tackle the impact of international price

fluctuations and the continued price decline in the key commodities of most of the least developed countries. This has continued to compromise not only the growth of their economies and their efforts at poverty-reduction, but also the sustainability of their debt burden.

A fall in the price of single commodity coffee over the last three years has forced 25 million people to fall below the poverty line. Children have been withdrawn from schools. Efforts at improving food security have been hampered. My country happens to be one of the countries affected by this negative development. In this regard we welcome the General Assembly President's initiative to put the commodity issue high on its agenda.

Thirdly, while we take note of the modest incremental increase in official developmental assistance flow to the continent in 2002, it falls far short of what is required to make a dent in the key development targets. At the current level of progress, Africa is unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. While reforms are being undertaken by African countries to address the challenges of education, health and HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, more investment is needed in this area.

Fourthly, despite the multitude of challenges in the economic and social fields, Africa's heavily indebted poor countries continue to spend more on debt servicing than on education and health.

I would like to once more emphasize that the conditions that necessitated the initiation of this dialogue among we Africans and the international community have not changed, and that the structural engagement between the donor countries and Africa must continue to be strained. We hope that one of the outcomes of this meeting will be an increased commitment and pledge of support in the earlier-mentioned areas, namely enhancing peace support operations, increased investment in agriculture and food security, addressing the issue of agricultural subsidies and other support measures that destabilize agriculture in Africa and mobilize additional resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.

I wish now to turn to the second item on our agenda, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa". We would like once again to underscore the inextricable link between peace and development which has been eloquently elaborated in the landmark 1998 report of the Secretary-General on this item (A/52/871-S/1998/318). We believe that the causes of conflict are multiple. However, poverty and marginalization are the key words to be used.

The complexity of the conflict in Africa warrants the involvement of a number of players in conflict resolution, including regional and subregional organizations. We commend the work of the African regional and subregional organizations. The role of the African Union and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development deserve our appreciation and need concerted support to strengthen their capacity in the prevention and management of conflicts.

In this connection, we take note with satisfaction of the cooperation between three countries, namely Mozambique, South Africa and my country Ethiopia as troop-contributors to the peacekeeping force of the African mission in Burundi. We also appreciate the support provided by the United States and the United Kingdom to this mission.

We would like to emphasize the need to further enhance the support of the international community for regional peacekeeping cooperation in Africa. We would also like to see increased cooperation among the United Nations, the African Union and the various subregional organizations involved in conflict prevention and management in Africa.

The challenges of post-conflict development and reconstruction in Africa are enormous. There is a need for the international community to assist the affected countries. Adequate resources must be provided to ensure the implementation of disarmament measures, including weapon collection, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Above all, adequate support must be provided for the rebuilding of infrastructure destroyed by prolonged conflict, income-generation programmes, demining activities, social services and the protection of vulnerable populations in war-torn countries.

The key question now with respect to this sub-item is how to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. We look forward to seeing

innovative ideas on this issue and are ready to engage in constructive consultation with a view to addressing the matter.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the high quality of his report (A/58/254) to the Assembly on progress in the implementation of, and international support for, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and of his report (A/58/352) on implementation of his recommendations on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development. The joint consideration of these two sub-items at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly underscores, if this were needed, the intrinsic link between peace and development and the urgent need to initiate a dual approach in tackling the challenges Africa needs to face.

The gravity of the situation in Africa poses a real danger for international peace and security. It is also disquieting for the safeguarding of human dignity. At the recent African Union meetings in Maputo, African States demonstrated their resolve to meet the challenges they are facing in the areas of reconstruction and peace-building in order to relaunch the development process, as well as in the area of addressing the causes of underdevelopment as a prerequisite for preserving peace and strengthening stability. One of the best instruments for commencing the development process is undoubtedly good governance, because corruption, social inequality and the absence of democracy generate tension and conflicts of interest, and exacerbate poverty. In that context, Benin reiterates its commitment to good governance as one of the prerequisites for achieving the NEPAD goals.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development bears the hope of the rebirth of the African continent. The implementation in an environment of transparency of the main focal points of that common, consensual programme will certainly take us further along the long road of growth and the campaign against poverty. The efforts of the African countries to improve and strengthen their economies might not, in the short and medium terms, bring all the expected results unless Africa's development partners assume their proper role in a true spirit of partnership, particularly in the mobilization of resources. The actions undertaken contain very high interim costs. Assistance measures must therefore be taken at the international level, in particular in the areas of direct investment and trade. Moreover, the flow of official development assistance needs to maintained in order to enable African countries to benefit from the concessional resources necessary for establishing socio-economic infrastructures. The coordinating role of the United Nations is crucial, which is why the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa should receive all necessary support. My delegation endorses the very relevant comments made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination including with respect to activities planned by the United Nations system for the implementation of NEPAD.

In resolution 57/7, the General Assembly made NEPAD the reference framework for Africa's development. Accordingly, performance indicators need to be developed to assess the implementation of the programme and the establishment of partnerships. We welcome the partnership between Africa and the Group of Eight (G-8). We also welcome the fact that the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development attached great importance to NEPAD's role as the reference framework for Africa's development.

It is essential that United Nations strengthen its support for African initiatives, as Africa contains 34 of the least developed countries. It would thus be appropriate for the entities responsible for implementing NEPAD, when setting up their programmes, take into account the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, whose low implementation rate is growing ever more alarming.

Benin, as Chairman of the Coordination Bureau for the Least Developed Countries, appeals to the responsibility and solidarity of the international community and our bilateral and multilateral partners. We must counter economic globalization, characterized by an implacable logic of exclusion, with a globalization of solidarity in order to tackle, in this environment of interdependence, the problems of humanity: poverty, pandemics, degradation of the environment, drug trafficking, debts and others. International cooperation and support for good governance will enable African countries to break the vicious circle of poverty, marginalization and prolonged destabilization.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I begin by reiterating my warmest compliments to you, Mr. President. I wish to say that Senegal, one of the founding members of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), is pleased to participate in this assessment of the past year's accomplishments in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and in the consideration of causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Both sub-items are the subjects of excellent reports to the Assembly by the Secretary-General, in documents A/58/254 and A/58/352 respectively.

Since the United Nations decided in September 2002 to make NEPAD the exclusive framework for its efforts for Africa, the implementation of the Partnership has more than ever been a core priority of the people, civil society organizations and leaders of Africa. Thus, working in concert based on a coherent, measured approach — and with the invaluable backing of the international community, the United Nations, the Group of Eight (G-8), the European Union, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and others — we have made significant progress towards realizing the NEPAD vision.

In that connection, allow me to refer to the integrated programme for the development of African agriculture adopted at the most recent Summit of the African Union and to the African Peer Review Mechanism, an intra-African mechanism for evaluation. These two priorities are a great source of satisfaction and a credit to our continent's resolve to take its future in hand, with the support and active solidarity of our bilateral and multilateral development partners.

In that vein, Senegal wishes to emphasize the growing interest shown in NEPAD by many countries and institutions in the North and the South alike. Special mention in that context is due to the G-8 for its important mobilization on behalf of Africa and to the United Nations system for the recent establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which our friend Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim Gambari is heading brilliantly. He deserves our increased support. It is also important to note and welcome the new framework of improved coordination of intervention on the ground of United Nations agencies and institutions based on five thematic clusters reflecting NEPAD priorities. Let us also not forget the recent Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development in support of NEPAD.

While even the most skeptical now agree that NEPAD, far from being unrealistic or a collection of pious hopes, is an ambitious programme that is gradually assuming its full scope, it is imperative that African countries and our partners in development persevere to that end, which is at the very least salutary, and especially through concrete action. For our part, we Africans are aware of the need to pursue reforms designed to promote good public and private governance, strengthen institutional and human capacities and implement sound macroeconomic policy.

In this and other spheres, NEPAD's success will depend in large part on the increased support of our partners, notably for projects. Allow me to provide a partial list of some such projects under way and of others still in the planning stage. I would point to the gas pipeline in West Africa; the integrated electric network in Southern Africa; the Casablanca-Dakar, Algiers-Bamako and Tripoli-Niamey-Lagos road infrastructure projects; and, in the field of new information and communication technologies, the extension into the African interior of branch networks of optic fibres linking Europe and America to Dakar, Pretoria and Kuala Lumpur.

There is reason to welcome the 5 per cent increase — the first increase in three decades — of the volume of official development assistance. We hope that this dynamic trend will continue and grow even stronger. France and other European partners have committed themselves to ensuring that the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product — reaffirmed at Monterrey and Johannesburg — will soon be achieved. Senegal also welcomes such initiatives as the United States Millennium Challenge Account and the envisaged establishment of an international financing facility. These two mechanisms will allow us to explore new ways and means of financing development and to attain the objectives embodied in the Millennium Declaration and NEPAD. This innovative approach would naturally bolster debt-reduction measures, steps to enhance the flow of direct foreign investment into Africa, and the opening of the markets of developed countries to African products.

The issue of access for our products to the markets of the North looms particularly large and

justifies our massive disappointment in the resounding breakdown of the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Cancún last month. Compounding the missed opportunity of the Doha Round, this failure has dampened the faith of Africans in multilateral trade negotiations. My country reiterates nevertheless that WTO remains the only body wherein problems relating to international trade are framed and discussed and must be resolved.

Senegal therefore resolutely welcomes the commitment recently made in Argentina by the developing countries to work to relaunch the negotiating process in the hope that relevant initiatives will be favourably received by our partners, whose multifaceted cooperation is highly appreciated in conflict resolution and the strengthening of the rule of law — two major imperatives that must be addressed above all by Africans themselves.

No assessment of Africa's situation can ignore the numerous conflicts that are mortgaging the continent's future growth and development. Building lasting peace is a long-term undertaking, to the success of which no effort must be spared. Senegal urges the Secretary-General to continue to publish his reports on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We are indubitably at a juncture wherein the hopes placed in the United Nations are, to put it mildly, far from being fulfilled. This is in era in which humankind has yet to find a way to save itself from such urgent problems as the scandal of poverty and exclusion, the tragedy of conflicts and humanitarian disasters, the ravages of HIV/AIDS and related infectious diseases, threats to the environment, the impact of the digital divide and the perils of terrorism. The list goes on. The promotion of sustainable development in Africa will remain illusory so long as conflicts continue to ravage our continent. African leaders have therefore established such new mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts as the Peace and Security Council and the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism.

A cursory consideration of the prospects for peace in Africa, particularly the West African subregion, will reveal that the forceful action of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and President Kufuor of Ghana have revived hopes in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. Those countries, to which we are bound by ties of friendship, have been battered and are in dire need of the political and financial support of the international community if they are to meet the enormous challenges of national reconciliation, reconstruction and economic and social recovery, best guarantees against the resurgence of the demons of instability and destabilization. In other words, in that subregion and elsewhere across the continent, great are the dangers arising from such recurrent phenomena as the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and their hideous corollary, mercenaries.

In light of the conclusions reached at a number of public meetings of the Security Council, it is high time to take the drastic measures recommended by ECOWAS and other subregional organizations to curtail and eliminate the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The economic and social development of that African subregion, and thus of Africa as a whole, is at stake. Senegal therefore pays tribute to France and the Netherlands for their initiative to ensure the adoption at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly of a draft resolution on regional promotion within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe of the United Nations Programme of Action to Combat the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In conclusion, mindful of the need to act in concert to find a collective response to the global threat posed by HIV/AIDS to international peace and security, suffice it to recall that, although our poor countries may be struggling to integrate themselves into the global economy, it is clear that we have managed to break with the past. Africans are determined to secure the ways and means necessary to realize their destiny in the context of the African Union and NEPAD, which are designed to allow Africa to assume what has always been its due role in the concert of continents.

Mr. Nteturuye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is pleased to see that the General Assembly, over which you preside, Mr. President, has decided to hold this unique meeting on two inter-connected subjects so important to Africa. We would like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the quality of his reports, which allow us both to take stock of the progress made in the political stabilization and development of our continent and to look to the future.

We welcome the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and we ask that the

necessary resources be given to the Office in order that it may properly carry out its mission.

With regard to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the determination to succeed in our common challenge is reflected in the speedy establishment of mechanisms to develop and coordinate regional development projects. In fact, the NEPAD secretariat has already begun to work; the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee is functioning and subscription to the Memorandum of Understanding on the African Peer Review Mechanism, which already has 15 signatories, is continuing. Sectoral progress has already been made, in cooperation with the competent agencies of the United Nations system.

Burundi has adopted its development programme as part of the interim strategic framework for economic recovery and poverty reduction. That programme is, to a great degree, based on NEPAD.

It is clear that Africa's desire to own its development strategy should be strengthened through new and reinvigorated relationships between Africa and its partners. Doing so is urgent and essential, given the very worrying trends we see today: a growth rate that has dropped from 4.3 per cent in 2001 to 3.2 per cent in 2002; the fact that HIV infection and AIDS now affect over 29.4 million people; and the very high percentage of people living in absolute poverty.

Africa cannot resolve its problems alone. It needs various forms of assistance from the international community, particularly through two types of action. First, the international community is urged to increase the level of official development assistance to African countries. In that regard, we welcome the rising trend we have observed in the past two years. That trend is in keeping with the initiatives announced in Monterrey and with the African Action Plan, adopted by the G-8 Summit held in Kananaskis, which was reaffirmed at Evian. That momentum must be continued in order to reach the United Nations goal of devoting 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance. In order to be effective, assistance must be tailored to the development strategies designed by recipient countries. Appropriate arrangements should also be found to complement the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative by either cancelling or alleviating debt burdens.

Secondly, we would like to emphasize the driving role of trade in development. Africa's role in international trade remains marginal, despite the wealth of its potential. The price of commodities, which is our main source of income, is constantly in a state of collapse, plunging millions of people into abject poverty. We are therefore concerned about agricultural subsidies in rich countries, which have a major negative impact on the lives of our rural populations. We wish to say that efforts to open up the markets of the North to commodities from the South should be continued.

With regard to the second item, which pertains to the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable development in Africa (A/58/352), my delegation associates itself with the assessment of the Secretary-General himself, who says that "progress has been slow and uneven". That should not discourage us, however; quite to the contrary, we need to redouble our efforts and be more imaginative to, among other things, resolve conflicts in our countries and create conditions for development.

We are pleased to note that the new African Union is now preparing to launch new initiatives for peace and development in Africa. However, in order to truly achieve the goal of bringing peace and stabilization to African countries in conflict, the African Union must organize itself to meet the challenges of genocide, poverty, the proliferation of light weapons, AIDS and poor governance. Early warning mechanisms must detect emerging signs of conflict in a timely manner, and preventive action should be taken swiftly. Once a conflict has broken out, it can only be resolved if political actions are accompanied by economic and humanitarian support for people who, generally speaking, live in untenable conditions during wartime. That aspect is sometimes forgotten, as donors make their assistance contingent on the restoration of security in a country, plunging us quickly into a vicious circle.

At least as far as Burundi is concerned, experience has shown that once a peace agreement or a ceasefire is concluded, unless a ceasefire monitoring or peacekeeping mission is quickly deployed, the situation can get worse and there is a risk that an all-out war will break out. Africa does not have the resources for that. Yet, the Security Council encourages Africans to resolve African conflicts themselves. Why do rich

countries take their time in providing financial and logistical resources to African countries that are making an effort to deploy their troops? For example, an African force has been deployed in Burundi for months, but it is not fully functioning due to a lack of necessary resources. Yet, with the signing in Pretoria in 2003 of the comprehensive Pretoria Protocol on Political, Defence and Security Power Sharing in Burundi between the Transitional Government and the main rebel movement in Burundi, there is an increasingly urgent need to prevent any resumption of war, which would cancel out all the efforts made by Burundi, the facilitator and the subregion.

My delegation notes that international conditions sometimes impede our momentum towards political and economic modernization in the continent. Dialogue must therefore continue on the basis of partnership between African countries themselves and between African countries and the rest of the international community, including such regional organizations as the African Union and NEPAD.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I should like to express to you my delegation's satisfaction at the perfect organization of this high-level debate, which enables us to assess progress in implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and international support for it. To the Secretary-General, my delegation once again expresses its gratitude for the very useful information and relevant recommendations contained in his report (A/58/254). We commend him for his efforts within the international community to attain the objectives contained in NEPAD's programmes.

The excellent report under consideration is the Secretary-General's first comprehensive report on the implementation of resolution 57/7, by which the General Assembly requested the international community and the United Nations system to organize their support for African countries in conformity with the principles, objectives and priorities of NEPAD. The report has the great merit of shedding light on both progress made and obstacles encountered, and it offers for our consideration a series of proposals aimed at supporting the process of implementing NEPAD and strengthening the support provided to it by many development partners.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the resolve and awareness shown by African leaders in implementing the provisions contained in NEPAD's programmes, particularly by integrating NEPAD's priorities into their respective countries' development policies and planning frameworks and by mobilizing national resources to that end. As we see it, NEPAD offers to African countries and their development partners the opportunity to re-launch Africa's development initiatives on the basis of commonly agreed objectives and mutual responsibilities.

As the priority establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism illustrates, NEPAD reflects African leaders' determination to shoulder responsibility for the development of their countries, in partnership with the international community. By committing themselves — with the international community's support — to ensuring peace, security, sound economic management and good governance in Africa, our African leaders are seeking to place NEPAD on a long-lasting and credible foundation. My delegation believes that development and peace are two inseparable elements. Consequently, any development activity must be accompanied by peace-building efforts. That is why we welcome African countries' commitment to peace, security and good management of their economies. The African continent seems to be on the right path for the swift realization of NEPAD's promises.

The report rightly stressed the importance of world partnership, including South-South cooperation, triangular cooperation and the decisive contribution that they can make to NEPAD's implementation. Nevertheless, we remain concerned that, despite the efforts of our partners and of Africans themselves, attainment of the Millennium Development Goals seems out of reach for most regions of the continent.

To achieve sustained and durable economic growth, we must attach greater importance to poverty reduction, human-based development, fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS and reducing dependence on imported foodstuffs. To help Africa reverse the current trend, development partners must continue to play a significant role in critical sectors by, inter alia, increasing official development assistance, creating a more open and more equitable trade system, relieving or cancelling debt and reducing agricultural subsidies.

In that context, it is important to stress the United Nations system's praiseworthy record in creating an operational framework for NEPAD at the national, regional and world levels. We particularly welcome the

lead role played in Africa by the Economic Commission for Africa, alongside the African Union and the African Development Bank. Undoubtedly, the creation on 1 May 2003 of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, charged with coordinating NEPAD at United Nations Headquarters, will enable us to strengthen and build on international momentum for development, peace and security in Africa.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its appreciation to the international community for the solidarity and partnership that it continues to demonstrate in making NEPAD a reality. We pay tribute to the Secretary-General for the resolute efforts of the Secretary-General and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa with a view to strengthening coordination among the various components of the international system so as to mobilize the support necessary for NEPAD's effective implementation.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): Mr. President, the delegation of the Republic of Sierra Leone wishes to express its profound appreciation to your Bureau for devoting this day to a comprehensive debate on progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We also extend a warm hand of gratitude to the Secretary-General and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa for the two lucid reports that have guided our participation in the debate.

NEPAD occupies a special place of pride in Africa's development and peace efforts, because it is the product of a shared vision of the continent's leaders that is built on their genuine desire to conquer the persistent miseries of underdevelopment and conflict, their concomitant frustrating dependence and other indignities. It is a challenge to Africa, set by Africa, owned by Africa and pursued by Africa. But it is also a challenge to the rest of the world to demonstrate understanding, solidarity and partnership with a continent that has very little to show for its immense natural resources. Moreover, it is a challenge to the rapidly expanding phenomenon of globalization to ensure that no part of the globe remains tethered to poverty and other disadvantages that deny it the enjoyment of the universally accepted basic necessities of life.

To the people of Sierra Leone, who suffered for 11 years in the devastating grip of one of the most brutal armed conflicts in the history of mankind but stood firm for their human and democratic rights, NEPAD connotes freedom; liberation from conflict and hunger; good health; stability; an end to abuse and to the violation of rights; peace and security; sound, democratic, transparent and accountable governance; and accelerated development. Thus, to us, the NEPAD programme is a blueprint for salvation, as it is to many other Africans. Certainly, hopes and expectations are high, almost bordering on utopia.

My delegation is delighted that, in spite of its numerous growing pains and constraints, NEPAD has scored impressive achievements within its short period of existence. We salute our African leaders and their partners as well as all others that have contributed to this success.

Sierra Leone has a national recovery programme designed to address the issues that engendered the conflict, as well as to serve as the foundation for national development. This recovery programme and its regional dimensions are in consonance with the objectives of NEPAD. Thus, even though we have yet fully to recover from the nightmare of a violent conflict, we are resolved to fulfil our commitment to NEPAD.

We note, and have great expectations of, the African Union's establishment of a Peace and Security Council to deal with issues of conflict and maintenance of peace on the continent. We propose, as early as now, for priority consideration of the Council when operational, a collective regional approach with a mechanism that is permanently ready speedily to respond to conflicts — even to signs of conflicts. This can reduce the human and material costs of conflicts. We further suggest the establishment of a permanent, rather than ad hoc, partnership with the United Nations, for the eradication of conflict from the continent.

We applaud NEPAD for its achievements and plans for the provision of social services and infrastructure. We would, however, like to point out one area that we think deserves more attention than was accorded it in the report — that is, tertiary education, especially at the university level, which produces the upper-level manpower for engineering our development. It is common knowledge that Africa is suffering a brain drain that is negatively affecting its development efforts. A substantial number of the best minds and professionals have left the continent in search of greener pastures. It is hard to imagine how

serious that problem is for war-ravaged countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. My delegation suggests that a special programme to motivate Africa's professionals to return home to build or rebuild their continent be cooperatively designed and pursued by national Governments and NEPAD.

My delegation is totally convinced that the resolution of any conflict can be accomplished only through a comprehensive programme that addresses the root causes of such conflict. This is the most concrete guarantee against the possibility of the country's sliding back into conflict. We urge NEPAD to make this issue a priority component of its peace programme. Also, it is undeniable that the most worrying challenge for any country emerging from conflict is how to manage its newly acquired treasure of peace, in addition to directly addressing the issues that generated the conflict.

We do not yet have an answer to that problem. Rather, we propose that NEPAD and its partners give the quest for an answer to that question a prominent place on the peace agenda for Africa. As a shining example of a United Nations peacekeeping success and a model of the determination of a people to achieve peace when the odds are stacked against them, Sierra Leone — it is hoped — will have an opportunity to report its experience to this world body on this matter in the near future.

There is no shortage of problems related to small arms and light weapons, particularly in the West African subregion. What we now need are the resources and the political will to resolve conflicts and carefully manage peace, thus ensuring that no market exists for small arms and light weapons in the region. We need also to cultivate in the region, through education and practice, a culture of peace that rejects the use of violence to settle disputes and differences — a culture that is based on the principles of participatory democracy, the rule of law, human rights and responsible governance.

It must be emphasized that there is no alternative to regional cooperation and support from the international community to build the capacity of poor African countries to cope with the deadly problem of small arms and light weapons. Consequently, we are appealing for technical and financial support from the international community to help us to meet our commitments.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that NEPAD is a noble venture for durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. In spite of numerous constraints, the programme is on course to achieve its goals. To sustain this momentum, we would like to appeal to our partners, both bilateral and multilateral, for more technical and financial support. With adequate support, Sierra Leone will never be found wanting in terms of its responsibility to implement the NEPAD programme.

Mr. Tekle (Eritrea): The Eritrean delegation takes this opportunity to extend its gratitude and thanks to the Secretary-General for the progress reports on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/58/352) and on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/58/254).

Since independence, numerous African States in almost all of the regions of the continent have been plagued by interminable internal conflicts and inter-State wars, whose number seems to be increasing, not decreasing. In spite of the end of the 30-year-long Eritrean war of liberation and of the equally long Angolan civil war, as well as of the civil wars in Mozambique and Sierra Leone, there are still a plethora of conflicts and wars in, inter alia, Somalia, the Sudan, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Eritrean-Ethiopian peace process, too, is being threatened with derailment.

Those wars have resulted in incalculable and widespread loss of life and destruction of property; they have created failed States and "soft" States ripe for destabilization; and they have ruined economies and, indeed, traditional, stable ways of life in many societies. They have created millions of refugees and displaced persons. They have caused disillusionment, despair and frustration — sentiments that are ready to be exploited by unscrupulous persons or groups.

Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of African States remain in the same extremely bad socio-economic situation as they were at the time of independence, in spite of the numerous economic and social experiments carried out, the strategies, declarations and programmes of action adopted and even the implementation of policies similar to those that have been successful in other regions.

It is heartening to note that the international community has undertaken peacemaking efforts at the

international and regional levels more actively than ever before. In this connection, due recognition must be given to the United Nations for the creation of the Security Council's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa and for the establishment of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on African Countries Emerging from Conflict. The concern for and commitment to African causes by individual or groups of developed States is also encouraging.

It is obvious that active and meaningful international assistance is needed if the continent is to liberate itself from a cycle of despair and embark on a course of development. Yet it is equally important to note that peace and development, which are inextricably linked, can be and must be promoted, protected and sustained essentially by Africans themselves. To that end, it will be necessary for us to reflect on the African condition deeply, to reassess ourselves more critically and to formulate more credible and meaningful strategies and policies.

What are the problems, and what must be done? The statistics are dismal. The World Bank's World Development Report 2003 clearly indicates that the average gross domestic product per capita in real purchasing power terms is lower during the third millennium than at the time of independence. It is only in Africa that poverty is on the rise; that almost 50 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa still lives on one dollar per day; that about 140 million African young people are illiterate; and that the number of school-age children who are out of school is increasing. In addition, health services not only are dismal but are unavailable to the overwhelming majority of Africans.

It is imperative to recognize the interdependence between peace and development in any attempt to discern the root causes of conflict and in any search for durable peace and development. Thus, we must identify the lowest common denominators of political instability in any African State beleaguered by civil strife or at war with its neighbours.

It has been claimed by some Western academic circles and policy makers that the nature of the African State, which is different from the Western model, is the primary cause of conflict, instability and underdevelopment. Neo-patrimonialist academics and their supporters in government have advanced the fatalist view that the African State, which is not functionally separated from society and which thrives not so much on formal institutions as on informal patron-client relationships, tends to promote the privatization of the State, to protect the distribution of resources and Government funds on a preferential basis and create what is known in French as "la politique du ventre". Inevitably, this has led to chronic shortages of resources and chronic instability, which spawn cyclical disorder characterized by corruption, internal conflict and even war with neighbouring States. The State is thus criminalized by such instrumentalization of disorder.

Recent democratization and development programmes are dismissed as not serious, and are considered only as measures to placate the donor community and as having no chance of being implemented. Such fatalism can be dismissed easily. Without being supportive of the attendant ills of patrimonialism, it can be pointed out that it has been successfully employed to achieve development and stability by countries in other regions. Indeed, informal systems have actually been formed by African societies to protect their interests, including the lives of their inhabitants, in situations where the State was so weak that it could not stave off poverty — indeed, famine — and the other uncertainties of life. Thus, it is altogether possible to expect that such informal systems may be useful in promoting development.

A more constructive criticism relates to the social chasm that divides development planners from the people — the would-be beneficiaries of development projects. Most development planning in Africa has hitherto been formulated from above, externally imposed by Governments or external actors with little knowledge of, or links with, the people, on the basis of administrative structures that ignore African realities, including cultural values. The overwhelming majority of the people have been excluded from the making of decisions which have a direct impact on their daily lives as well as on their future. The net result of such development planning from above and outside has been — in spite of the good intentions of the planners — poverty, hunger, disease, social disorder, conflict, displacement and forced immigration, and environmental degradation.

It is only recently that development based on participatory democracy and self-reliance, within the context of the cultural environment of any given

country, has been made popular. There is now near-unanimous consensus in the African intellectual milieu that no external assistance, however useful, can be a substitute for self-reliance, and that only participatory democracy at all levels of society can foster an environment for clean, responsible, accountable and transparent government.

Obviously, in the era of globalization, it is not possible for societies, wherever they may be located, to live in isolation, and they must therefore be prepared to live with the attendant consequences of the global village. On the other hand, they must be able to formulate strategies and policies which would allow the harmonious interplay of external influence and local cultural features.

Africa is now waging what is popularly known as the second liberation struggle, whose principles and objectives aim at reversing the frightening process which is threatening national integration. Those objectives include the broadening and deepening of the relations between centre and periphery and improving the social fabric of our societies, the health of our peoples and the relations between States. The struggle is predicated on harmonious and cooperative relations among States based on the principles of coexistence and respect for the rule of law. That is the Eritrean understanding of the African renaissance.

It is in this context that we recognize the relevance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). At the beginning of the new millennium, Africa seems to be determined to open a new chapter in its history and to credibly address the numerous challenges it is facing. The renewed determination of its leaders to kick-start inter-African cooperation and to establish a meaningful relationship with the international community is a commendable commitment of historic significance. The African Union seems to possess the structural attributes that the Organization of African Unity lacked to address conflict and development issues effectively. The international community seems to have received the Union well. All of this augurs well for NEPAD.

NEPAD differs from previous African initiatives — including, inter alia, the Lagos Plan of Action — if only because it is a holistic, comprehensive and strategic socio-economic plan which identifies and prioritizes critical political, cultural, social and economic issues. It also provides for the creation of essential organs to ensure timely implementation of programmes to achieve its goals.

However, NEPAD is not without its flaws. Among the major sources of concern and criticism from African academics and members of civil society are that African Governments will not commit themselves to the management of their respective States with the requisite good governance, and the rooting out of corruption, needed for the success of NEPAD; that African Governments will not uncritically accept globalization and readily integrate their economies into the international system; that most African Governments have already questioned the viability and applicability of the African Peer Review Mechanism; that many African members of civil society question the correctness of the idea of receiving from potential donors the $64 billion purportedly needed to activate NEPAD, as it would establish a dependency relationship that would in fact lead to the further weakening of African economies and the curtailment of their independence and sovereignty; that NEPAD is considered "undemocratic", as it did not benefit from consultation with members of African civil society, including, inter alia, community-based organizations, academics and other professional groups; that NEPAD is considered contradictory because, in fact, it focuses on aid while its rhetoric decries African dependence on aid and emphasizes trade and investment as the real solutions to Africa's economic woes; and that many in Africa are sceptical that developed countries will translate pledges of assistance into concrete action.

There is no question that the African Union, which is now empowered to ensure full African ownership of the NEPAD initiative, will be able to successfully achieve all of the Partnership's political, economic, social and environmental goals with the further refinement and clarification of strategies and programmes to allay fears and to eliminate concerns.

Mr. Kasri (Indonesia): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his thorough report (A/58/254) on progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with support from the international community, including the United Nations system. Despite many difficulties, which the report highlights, it is clear that the momentum for Africa's development is increasing.

Although some believe that Africa poses the greatest development challenge for the twenty-first century, its leaders have clearly demonstrated faith in their own ability to overcome the many hurdles to the development of their nations. They have come up with a credible and workable plan to bring about a positive transformation in the still-difficult circumstances affecting the continent.

We are pleased to learn from the report that civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have contributed constructively to NEPAD's implementation. Such support is important, because Africa needs all the help it can get from all relevant stakeholders at all levels to implement NEPAD.

Perhaps one of the most serious obstacles to the full implementation of NEPAD is the persistent civil strife and conflict that exist in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Development can occur only in peaceful conditions, because conflict depletes Africa's valuable human and financial resources and destroys infrastructure. It is therefore encouraging to learn of the development of a plan of action to enhance Africa's capability for conflict prevention and the promotion of peace. Note has also been taken of the African Union's establishment of a Peace and Security Council to ensure that peace prevails in order to allow for the continent's development.

In addition to peace, there is also a need for funding. Yet, despite the fact that they are severely constrained by unfavourable economic and financial circumstances, African countries are nevertheless determined to retain ownership and leadership of NEPAD by providing its core funding. However, that does not mean that the financial problems of African development have been adequately addressed. On the contrary, funding from donor countries remains a critical factor in the successful implementation of NEPAD. In providing such support, it is important that donors respond to development priorities set by African countries themselves. The deep involvement of African leaders in the continent's development process makes them fully knowledgeable about which areas require urgent attention in order that NEPAD may produce the results they desire. In providing the necessary assistance, it is crucial that donors align their aid programmes with respective national strategies.

It is indeed heartening to learn from the report that a number of African countries have benefited from acts of debt relief, debt forgiveness and outright debt cancellation as indirect forms of funding. It is equally heartening to learn that official development assistance to Africa is increasing, consistent with commitments made at Monterrey. However, with the present levels of assistance, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will be beyond the reach of most African countries. The solution is obvious. Given the enormity of Africa's needs, official development assistance must increase substantially. Donor countries must honour the commitments they made at the various international conferences and summits to promote global development, because funding will accelerate implementation of NEPAD and make the Millennium Development Goals practical targets for African countries.

It is therefore imperative that donors respond to the appeal for $22 billion annually to enable African countries to reach internationally agreed health targets. Although African countries have committed themselves to increasing their health budgets by 15 per cent, those increases are unlikely to fully satisfy their needs for funding in the health sector. By extension, that means that programmes aimed at controlling and eliminating HIV/AIDS in Africa must continue to be supported financially by donor countries.

I would also like to emphasize that greater international cooperation is needed in order to accelerate the implementation of NEPAD. In that connection, the efforts and initiatives of the international community should be encouraged, as they provide meaningful support for African development. In that respect, and in the spirit of the Bandung Asian-African Conference of 1955, Indonesia, together with South Africa, co-chaired the first Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, on 29 and 30 July 2003. The Conference not only endorsed NEPAD, but also laid the foundation for wide-ranging cooperation between Asia and Africa.

In its effort to establish links between the two continents, the Conference emphasized both the collective responsibilities and the important role of subregional organizations in exploring and implementing concrete steps to propel growth and development in both regions. The Conference discussed areas of cooperation and issues of strategic importance to both regions that will become key elements of a new strategic partnership.

The second Conference, scheduled to be held in South Africa next year, will further develop a programme of work with specific time frames, modalities, operational approaches and formats for cooperation to ensure the realization of the new strategic partnership. The partnership is expected to be launched in 2005 during the Asian-African summit in conjunction with the commemoration of the golden jubilee of the Bandung Asian-African Conference.

In conclusion, Indonesia is encouraged by the progress of the implementation of NEPAD. While recognizing the many constraints affecting the efforts of African countries, the international community should continue to support and assist African countries to enable them to push forward with their continental vision. In this regard, Indonesia stands in full solidarity with our brotherly African countries.

Mr. Berry (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to reaffirm Canada's strong commitment to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD recognizes that peace, security, democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and sound economic management are preconditions for sustainable development in Africa. The integrated, credible and comprehensive programme of action set forth in NEPAD represents the best opportunity the people of Africa are likely to have to improve their quality of life and to respond to the challenges confronting their continent. All Member States and almost every part of the United Nations system have a role to play in ensuring that NEPAD succeeds.

In September of last year, during the Assembly's high-level debate on NEPAD (see A/57/PV.10), Prime Minister Chrétien emphasized that the time for talk had passed and that now there must be action.

Canada is delivering on its commitments in support of NEPAD, including those set out in the Group of Eight (G-8) Africa Action Plan adopted in Canada in 2002. In January of this year, for example, we opened our markets, quota- and tariff-free, to almost all imports from the least developed countries. The transparent rules-of-origin provisions we introduced, in addition to our trade-related capacity-building initiatives, will allow African countries other than the 34 least developed countries in Africa to also benefit from this increased market access.

The February 2003 federal budget increased Canada's international assistance by 8 per cent annually through 2004-2005, half or more of which will be earmarked for Africa. That is in keeping with our commitment made at Monterrey to double our international assistance by the end of the decade. This will amount to $6 billion in international assistance for Africa in new and existing resources in the five-year period following the 2002 G-8 Summit.

We have also begun to change the manner in which we allot official development assistance. We included African partners, in particular the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, in the peer review of Canada undertaken last year by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee. We are also untying our aid.

(spoke in English)

We are set to double Canadian support for basic education in Africa to $100 million per year. Through the $500 million Canada Fund for Africa, set up in support of NEPAD, we are making major contributions towards polio eradication, AIDS vaccine research, digital opportunities, institutional capacity-building, agricultural research and development, capacity for peace support in Africa and much, much more. For instance, we are launching a Canada Investment Fund for Africa with $100 million in Government funding, to be matched by the private sector, for the purpose of encouraging private sector engagement in Africa. We are also providing support to the African Development Bank to improve the capacity of African countries to prepare projects and tap into unused sources of financial support for the development of infrastructure initiatives.

Canada welcomes the World Trade Organization's (WTO) historic decision on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and public health. As members know, we are taking steps to implement that decision domestically. We are well aware that Canada's leading initiative will be watched carefully by the international community. We realize it is important for us to do this correctly, in a manner that ensures consistency with both the spirit and the purpose of the WTO decision of 30 August.

At the G-8 Summit in France in June 2003, G-8 leaders renewed their commitment to their Africa Action Plan and undertook to review progress in its implementation no later than their 2005 Summit in the United Kingdom. We will continue to work closely

with our G-8 partners, and we look forward to the expansion of the G-8's partnership with African countries in support of NEPAD to include other major partners of Africa and key international institutions.

NEPAD is beginning to have an impact, to the benefit of the peoples of Africa. The success of African partners in their bold attempt to launch an African Peer Review Mechanism gives expression to this. The African Peer Review Mechanism and the identification, through it, of best practices relating to governance, stand to be of enormous symbolic and practical value in attaining NEPAD's objective of establishing the conditions necessary for development, including through increased investment and trade.

The persistent failure of some African Governments to respect the principles contained in NEPAD and to govern in the interest of their people must not blind us to the success that is being achieved elsewhere on the continent. For example, in Kenya the new Government has moved quickly to implement the concepts contained in NEPAD by expanding access to education and by rooting out corruption. Democracy is on the ascendant in Africa, and NEPAD has an important part to play.

Today's debate speaks to the remarkable success that NEPAD has had in ensuring that crises elsewhere do not divert the world's attention away from Africa's potential and its needs. We must all continue to build on that initial success.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): Let me begin by thanking the Secretariat for its report on the sub-item entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD): progress in implementation and international support: causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/58/352), which was submitted in compliance with resolution 57/296. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the Chairman of the African Union.

In his opening statement in the general debate of the Second Committee on 6 October, Mr. José Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, indicated that the world economic recovery was gaining traction and that the recovery was expected to solidify and broaden in 2004. Mr. Ocampo also indicated that, in spite of that improvement, global economic growth had slipped since the Millennium Declaration was adopted, with developing countries bearing the brunt of the slowdown. If this trend continues, only a few African countries will meet the Millennium Development Goals.

It is against that background that I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to some issues related to this agenda item that are of concern to my delegation and affect its work. Given the depressing economic growth rates, the staggering figure of 30 million people living with HIV/AIDS, the 380 million people living in absolute poverty and the fact that armed conflict in several countries is reversing positive trends in human development, there is an urgent need to completely overhaul the development paradigm in Africa so as to meet the challenges of implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Reversing those trends will require a new, energized relationship between Africa and its partners, based on trust and a shared responsibility for development effectiveness. My Government underscores the importance of African ownership of the continent's development strategies as a means of underpinning the transformed partnerships that we seek with our development partners. This will involve developing home-grown policies and programmes for poverty reduction, improving our governance systems and resolving conflicts on the continent.

If the challenges of Africa are to be met, developed countries also need to do a great deal more on aid, trade and debt relief. My delegation calls on our partners to continue to focus on increasing the quantity and improving the quality of aid, as well as on enhancing policy coherence, both of which are considered central to upholding our partners' side of mutual accountability.

There has been some progress in making official development assistance more effective. We welcome the progress made in various forums, including through the Monterrey Consensus and official development assistance commitments by members of the Group of Eight and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In spite of those commitments, official development assistance flows to Africa are still too low and the principle of African ownership is often compromised by conditionalities.

We also welcome efforts by our partners to align their aid programmes with country-led national development strategies. My delegation applauds Japan for linking the Tokyo International Conference on

African Development to support for Africa's strategy for development — NEPAD. However, the slow pace at which some of our partners are aligning their aid modalities is undermining our national systems and processes for development. Predictability and the timely disbursement of support remain elusive, creating difficulties for our countries in designing and implementing key policies. My delegation welcomes the proposed establishment of the international finance facility, designed to mobilize additional resources to help the poorest countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals. We would welcome its innovations, among them attempts to address the issue of predictability, an emphasis on the untying of aid and a focus on low-income countries.

In the area of trade, the aid given by developed countries is often undercut by their trade policies. We call on our partners to ensure that policies having an impact on African development, including those relating to official development assistance, trade, market access and agriculture, are consistent with the Millennium Development Goals. My delegation welcomes France's proposal to remove subsidies on agricultural products as a step towards greater market access for African products.

With regard to the African debt crisis, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative has brought debt relief to a number of African countries. The HIPC Initiative, however, is not delivering long-term debt sustainability as expected, and African countries remain overburdened by external debt. Developing countries should rethink their strategies for resolving the debt crisis. There are many facets of the debt crisis, but the fundamental weakness is that the creditors continue to dominate the decision-making process with regard to the resolution of the debt crisis. Debt-relief initiatives have been designed by donors to safeguard their interests. There is a need for arbitration on specific types of loans or debt, in particular odious and illegitimate debt. There are debts that African countries ought not to pay because their people never benefited from the loans. These include debts incurred by illegitimate debtors, loans misused because of corruption, debts incurred as a result of illegitimate loans for projects that did not benefit the people as intended, and debts incurred through wrong policy advice, such as adjustment policies, or as a result of external factors over which the debtors have no control. The list should include debts in connection with which money was actually stolen and banked in the North.

Conflict and development are incompatible. African countries must work together and use the mechanisms within NEPAD to prevent and resolve armed conflict and bring political stability to Africa. We welcome the steps towards peace in Liberia, the Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. Recent events in Côte d'Ivoire are cause for concern, and amply demonstrate that the consolidation of peace is important in preventing the recurrence of conflict and constitutes an initial step towards development.

There has been a notable improvement in peace and security in some parts of Africa due to the efforts of Africa leaders themselves, supported by the international community. African countries should consolidate peace and put an end to remaining conflicts on the continent so that States can devote all their capacities and resources to economic growth and sustainable development. Conflict remains a serious obstacle to development because it wastes vital resources and has long-term consequences, such as refugees, internally displaced persons, landmines and the proliferation of small arms, which often exacerbate conflict.

In conclusion, my delegation agrees with the Secretary-General's report that, while progress has been made in some areas, in general it has been very slow and uneven. Although there should be African ownership of the African development process, international partnership also has an important role to play in extending comprehensive and integrated assistance to African countries. African development can be achieved only by the concerted efforts of Africa and its development partners.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/58/254) and on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/58/352).

NEPAD is a major initiative by the African countries to empower themselves by joining forces with a view to achieving development. It is an expression of their determination, courage and

pioneering spirit in taking their destiny into their own hands. In the year under review, Africa has made good progress in the implementation of NEPAD. In July 2003, in an effort to ensure the implementation of NEPAD, the African Union held a summit meeting, which adopted a Declaration on the New Partnership. Moreover, African countries have set up national focal points, implemented regional measures and achieved welcome results in areas such as agriculture, health care, education, environment and infrastructure. We believe that through these efforts, African countries will make historic headway in their path to development and reconstruction.

African development requires the active support and assistance of the international community in implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). African countries face myriad challenges in the areas of resources, debt relief, trade and investment. The Secretary-General's report points out that official development assistance to Africa declined throughout the 1990s, falling from $26.6 billion in 1990 to $16.4 billion in 2000. In the past two years, there has been a rebound, but the amount still fell short of the 1990s level. Moreover, the linkage of official development assistance is on the increase, with procedures becoming increasingly cumbersome.

There has been limited focus in areas of trade and lack of progress in key areas of importance and interest to Africa, such as market access and agriculture subsidies. Trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights and public health are hurting the development of African countries. Investment prospects do not offer grounds for optimism. Therefore, I wish to underscore the following points concerning the future support of the international community for African development.

First, Africa's ownership and leadership of NEPAD must be respected. Externally imposed conditions do not offer genuine solutions to African problems. In many instances, liberalization, privatization, market reform and other readjustment programmes not only do not promote African economic growth, but, to the contrary, they create serious social problems. Therefore, the international community should fully acquaint itself with the real circumstances of African countries, respect their sovereign choices and development strategies and support the efforts of the African continent.

Secondly, the commitments made to Africa in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the World Summit for Sustainable Development Plan of Action must be translated into reality. The international community must genuinely deliver on commitments in the areas of debt, trade, official development assistance and the transfer of technology. African development also requires a fair and equitable international economic environment that is conducive to enhancing Africa's capacity for self-sustaining development.

Thirdly, the prevention and the resolution of conflicts are important guarantees for the development of Africa. Over the past year, positive progress has been made in seeking settlements in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. However, uncertainties remain in some countries and regions. Bringing about comprehensive peace and stability in Africa will be an arduous and long-term task. It is the shared responsibility and the obligation of all members of the international community to help African countries realize national reconciliation.

The United Nations should play a bigger role in Africa in the areas of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction and peace. Our Organization should strengthen its coordination and cooperation with African, regional and subregional organizations. We call on national Governments to attach greater importance to Africa, support African countries in peace-seeking efforts, increase assistance to enhance the peace process and give priority to capacity-building in African countries.

The consolidation and the development of friendly relations with the African people and the provision of support and assistance to African States for their economic and social development constitute a main focus of China's foreign policy. China has established the China-Africa Cooperation Forum to carry out extensive and in-depth exchanges and cooperation with African countries.

The Chinese Government has already signed debt-cancellation protocols with 31 African countries totalling $1.05 billion, which accounts for about 60 per cent of the matured debts of those countries. From 15 to 16 December 2003, the second ministerial meeting of the Forum will be held in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. This marks the first Forum meeting to be

held on the African continent. The Chinese Government will send a high-level delegation. This meeting will review the implementation of two important programmes — the Beijing Declaration and the China-Africa Economic and Social Development Programme.

On the basis of the Forum's experience of the past three years, delegations will discuss ways and means of enhancing cooperation in areas of human resources, agriculture, infrastructure and investment. The China-Africa Entrepreneur Forum and the China-Africa Friendship Exhibition will be featured at the ministerial meeting.

I wish to conclude by emphasizing that the Chinese Government is ready to continue supporting African development and the implementation of NEPAD through the China-Africa Cooperation Forum and other cooperation channels.

Mr. Alexandre (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, at the outset, on behalf of the Haitian delegation, to warmly congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his outstanding work on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Resolution 57/7 is particularly important to Haiti because it attests to the determination of the peoples of Africa, supported by the international community, to fight poverty and to work to develop the African continent. This part of the world has long endured for the heavy blows of history, nature's whims and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Of 1.3 billion people around the world living below the poverty line, 350 million are in Africa. High debt and structural problems of all kinds severely handicap the social economic development of the continent.

That is why we must stay the course, guided by the Millennium Declaration and the goals set at Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg. We must join our efforts to free men, women and children from extreme poverty that strips them of their humanity. It is our responsibility to continue to work to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor countries and to ensure that globalization benefits all of humankind.

My delegation reiterates its unconditional support for NEPAD and reaffirms its solidarity and cooperation with the fraternal African peoples and Governments. This ambitious initiative, which redefines a partnership of responsibility and commitment, reflects Africa's determination to take charge of its destiny. The challenge is great. Overcoming it requires, among other things, another form of trade relations with the developed countries and the honouring of commitments made by international partners. The failure at Cancún once again underscores the need to rethink global trade mechanisms.

This initiative by Africa for Africa continues to require the full support of the international community, particularly the donor countries. It represents an opportunity to break with tradition and for all our partners to coordinate their support, taking into account priorities of the Governments and peoples of that region, not by imposing conditions from the outside. My delegation believes that we should seize this historic opportunity to put an end to the suffering of the peoples of Africa, for there is no shortage of resources to do so. Ongoing responsible leadership on the part of Africa to work steadfastly towards lasting development on the continent will contribute to ensuring NEPAD's full success.

There is no doubt that, with all their energy and creativity and with the genuine support of their partners, the people of Africa aspire to improving their quality of life. My delegation believes that we should take advantage of that momentum to bring about a productive partnership to reduce the aforementioned gap between rich and poor in order to bring about development in the African continent.

As the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/254 points out, it is encouraging to note that, one year after the General Assembly adopted resolution 57/12, African countries have adopted various constructive initiatives with a view to integrating the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development into their national policies and development planning frameworks, as well as to mobilize national resources to support that very important initiative. My delegation welcomes the commitment of African countries to peace, democracy and good governance, which are essential to achieving lasting development.

We welcome the resurgence in official development assistance to the African continent, which rose from $16.38 billion in 2000 to $18.62 billion in 2002. We also welcome the debt alleviation provided to 22 African countries, as well as the debt cancellation for certain countries of the region that have met the

conditions of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

The delegation of Haiti would like to conclude by expressing its appreciation for the support afforded by the United Nations system to NEPAD in line with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Programme of work

The President: On Monday morning, 20 October 2003 the General Assembly will consider, as the first item, a letter by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to be issued as document A/58/356/Add.1. This is an addition to the programme that was already announced in document A/INF/58/4/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.